NCA
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JOHN BUE/PARIS

NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: SECOND SESSION

ANNCR:

THE SECOND SESSION IN PARIS OF THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDUSTRIALIZED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTED BY A POSITIVE AND BUSINESSLIKE APPROACH TO THE TREMENDOUSLY COMPLEX ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION. VOA'S JOHN BUE HAS THIS BACKGROUNDER.

VOICE:

THOSE WHO WRONGLY EXPECTED THIS SECOND SESSION TO COME UP WITH NEW PROPOSALS FOR OVERCOMING INEQUALITIES AMONG THE RICH AND POOR NATIONS OF THE WORLD WERE DISAPPOINTED. THE EXPERTS IN THE DIALOGUE HAVE NOT YET ADJUSTED THEIR SIGHTS TO SUCH AN EXERCISE. THEIR TWO FIRST SESSIONS WERE DEVOTED TO DEVELOPING A COMMON ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION AS A BASIS FOR SEEKING AGREED SOLUTIONS.

EVEN THIS COMMON ANALYSIS IS NOT EASY TO ACHIEVE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIFTEEN MEMBERS OF THE ENERGY COMMISSION AGREED ON WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS IN A CHAOTIC OIL MARKET. BUT THEY DID NOT AGREE ON HOW MUCH OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD'S INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASED OIL PRICES. THIS LACK OF CONVERGENCE FORMS THE BACKGROUND FOR NEXT MONTH'S DISCUSSION BY THE ENERGY COMMISSION OF OIL PRICE PROBLEMS AND OF HOW TO PROTECT THE PURCHASING POWER OF OIL EXPORTS.

A SIMILAR LACK OF CONVERGING ANALYSIS IS EVIDENT IN THE FINANCIAL COMMISSION; THE MEMBERS COULD NOT AGREE ON BALANCE OF PAYMENT DEFICIT PROJECTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPING NATIONS.

THE ESTIMATES FOR THE END OF THE DECADE VARY BETWEEN SIXTY AND EIGHTY-SIX THOUSAND MILLION. BECAUSE OF THESE UNDERSTANDABLE DIFFICULTIES, THE NEXT SESSION IN APRIL MAY STILL LARGELY BE DEVOTED TO A REFINEMENT OF ANALYSES DESPITE THE DEVELOPING NATIONS' URGENT DESIRE TO GET DOWN TO CONCRETE ISSUES. IN MAY, THERE WILL BE NO SESSION OF THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE IN PARIS BECAUSE THE INDUSTRIALIZED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS WILL BE MEETING WITHIN UNCTAD, THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT, DEALING WITH A LARGELY PARALLEL RANGE OF SUBJECTS.

BUT DESPITE THE APPARENT LACK OF FORWARD MOVEMENT, THE PARIS COMMISSIONS HAVE ALREADY PROVED THEIR VALUE AS A COORDINATED FORUM. THE COMMISSION ON DEVELOPMENT CALLED FOR SPEEDY ACTION TO SET UP THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS ONE THOUSAND MILLION DOLLAR FUND IS SEEN AS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE THE AGREED GOAL OF INCREASED FARM PRODUCTION IN DEVELOPING NATIONS.

WHILE THE RAW MATERIALS COMMISSION WAS DISCUSSING COMMODITY PROBLEMS IN GENERAL TERMS, AN UNCTAD GROUP SESSION IN GENEVA SET UP A PERMANENT ORGANIZATION INCLUDING ABOUT THIRTY COPPER PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS. THE US REPRESENTATIVE DESCRIBED THE DECISION AS A SIGNICANT MILESTONE IN CONSUMER-PRODUCER RELATIONS. THUS, THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE HAS ALREADY PROVIDED TWO EXAMPLES OF ITS POSSIBLE ROLE AS A STIMULANT FOR ACTION IN OTHER FORUMS.

ANOTHER ENCOURAGING SIGN WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE US AND ALGERIAN DELEGATION CHIEFS. AMERICA'S STEPHEN BOSWELL APPLAUDE WHAT HE CALLED THE ABSENCE OF RHETORIC AND POLEMICS IN THE

DISCUSSIONS. ALGERIA'S AIT CHAALAL WELCOMED THE CONCERTED EFFORTS IN THE SEARCH FOR COMMON SOLUTIONS. IF THIS POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE KEEPS UP IN FUTURE SESSIONS, AGREED PROPOSALS MAY WELL MATERIALIZE BY THE TIME THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE RECONVENES IN DECEMBER.

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